



STAR-BUST

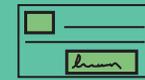
story by **katie murphy**

The former employees of the unionized then-closed Plaza Starbucks have been reassigned as the corporation faces lawsuits for alleged union-busting

HOW TO UNIONIZE *Steps to create a labor union*



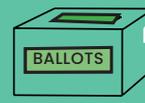
1 FILE FOR UNION BY FILLING OUT FORM FOR KANSAS LABOR BOARD



2 EMPLOYEES ARE GIVEN CARDS TO SIGN IN SUPPORT OF A UNION



3 40-50% EMPLOYEES NEED TO HAVE SIGNED THE UNION CARDS FOR THE APPROVAL FROM THE LABOR BOARD



4 AN OFFICIAL VOTE IS MADE BY ALL EMPLOYEES ON THE UNION WITH A MAJORITY NEEDED FOR RATIFICATION

THE ABRUPT CLOSURE of the Plaza Starbucks location on Aug. 22 added local claims of union-busting and employee mistreatment to ongoing national lawsuits against the corporation.

Multiple entities across the U.S., including New York City and the National Labor Relations Board, are suing Starbucks for preventing employees from exercising their right to organize. The Plaza location was one of the five Kansas City area stores to hold a vote to join the Starbucks Workers United Labor union. The store didn't join the union, with a 9-9 tie in the June 9 vote — one ballot short of the 51% majority cutoff. However, it was officially labeled a union activity store thereafter, simply for holding

union busting

a range of activities undertaken to disrupt or prevent the formation of trade unions or their attempts to grow their membership in a workplace.

the vote at all.

The closure forced Starbucks barista and senior Roberto Galicia, who voted “yes” to unionizing, to transfer to the Brookside location.

“Management started treating us differently in the Plaza after the union activity, and I’ve noticed it at my new store as well,” Galicia said.

Of the 19 stores Starbucks has closed nationwide in recent months, 42% were

union activity stores, according to a news release from the labor union. The union demands equal and sustainable living wages, increased security and for Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz to publicly outline employee rights, which Galicia echoes.

“I saw more of a reason to unionize the longer I worked there,” Galicia said. “Our location had 50-people rushes for four-hour periods at a time. My manager got slapped on multiple occasions by impatient customers. It was stressful and unsafe.”

Galicia wanted the store — that only had a temporary security guard — to hire a permanent security guard due to safety concerns, especially when closing at night.

Immediately after voting to unionize, Galicia's coworker — Plaza Starbucks union-organizing committee member Josh Crowell — reported Starbucks management imposing stricter rules on the Plaza location workers. The company-wide July dress code statement read: “The expanded color options for tops and changes to crewneck sweatshirts, jeggings and white shoes will not apply to stores with union organizing activity.”

Management did not respond to requests for comment.

In addition to the dress code, employee wages at unionized stores differed from other locations. All Starbucks employees received a \$3 raise on Aug. 1 — except Galicia and other workers at union activity stores, who received their raise 28 days later.



ISAW MORE OF A reason to unionize the longer I worked there. Our location had 50-people rushes for four-hour periods at a time. My manager got slapped on multiple occasions by impatient customers. It was stressful and unsafe.

ROBERTO GALICIA

SENIOR safety concerns.

“I understand to an extent the safety issues that led to the closure,” Galicia said. “But the timing with the union activity was just a bit too coincidental.”

Crowell agrees that the closure was more convenient for Starbucks than its employees. He was reassigned to the 41st and Main Street location, where he now walks 20 minutes to work from his Plaza apartment since he can't afford a car.

“Starbucks is claiming that security is why they shut us down, but now I'm walking

half a mile down Main Street alone at 4:15 in the morning to go open the store at 4:30,” Crowell said. “Objectively, that's not any safer for me.”

At the Plaza location, managers told Crowell that he'd be unable to receive benefits, transfer stores or earn a raise if he continued associating with the union. He's grateful that the 41st location is unionized and has Weingarten rights — the ability to transfer and earn benefits. Still, his major concern is safety, since the 41st street location also doesn't have a security guard.

“I have definitely seen people who are far more volatile and aggressive at the 41st Street location than at the Plaza,” Crowell said. “I saw an aggressive guy just the other day drive over the curb and jump the sidewalk. Starbucks isn't changing any of their policies or procedures to make other locations safer either.”

At the un-unionized Brookside location, Galicia's new manager informed him that he would be paid \$3 less per hour than the other workers between Aug. 23 and 29 due to his union activity history. Him and Crowell believe that union activity workers who have been withheld raises should be compensated for lost wages.

“The best solution is whatever is democratically voted on,” Crowell said. “Starbucks should take into account their employees' opinions to find a solution that works for us as well, instead of silencing us.”